

SECOND REPORT

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

IN BEHALF OF THE

FREED PEOPLE OF COLOR.

NEW BEDFORD:

E. ANTHONY & SONS, PRINTERS, 67 UNION STREET.

1865.

THE Executive Committee at their meeting in Providence 1st mo. 6, 1865, directed that an Abstract of the proceedings of the Board in behalf of the Freedmen, embracing also such other information as might be interesting, be prepared and printed for circulation among Friends of New England.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of Friends appointed by our Yearly Meeting to promote efforts for the relief and improvement of the Freed people of Color, held at New Bedford, 11th month, 30th, 1864,

The proposal referred from our last meeting relative to the purchase of land in Washington and the erection thereon of a building or buildings necessary for the establishment and maintenance of an Agency there, was introduced, when after a full expression of unity and encouragement from Friends present the Committee united in the adoption of the plan proposed, and the following Friends were appointed a Committee with authority to purchase land for this purpose, procure the necessary materials, and erect such buildings as in their judgment may be needed, for the accommodation of a school, for a store, and also for a home for the Agents and teacher, and to draw on our Treasurer for the expense incurred; viz., Edward W. Howland, Edward Earle, Alden Sampson, Benjamin Buffum, Ann B. Earle, Gulielma W. Howland, Ellen K. Buffum, and Eliza B. Boyce.

R E P O R T .

At a subsequent meeting of the Executive Committee the following Report was presented by the above Committee, viz. :

According to our appointment five of our number went to Washington, taking with us Eli Jones and Lavinia H. Jones, of Maine, and Sarah E. Wall, of Worcester, as our "Mission Agents," arriving there Sixth day evening, 12th month 9th. Our first care next day was to find suitable boarding places for our Agents, in the neighborhood where they were to labor. Failing in this we resorted to the alternative of hiring a house to be used as a home for the Mission. Obtained a single, two-story new house, with quite a yard attached, at a rent of \$35 per month. Into this house we settled our Agents at once, purchasing some furniture, and receiving the remainder from our Committee in the North. An eligible location was then selected for the buildings proposed to be erected, and after thoroughly examining the title, nine lots were purchased on Thirteenth street, between R and S, 180 feet on Thirteenth street, and 160 feet deep, at a cost for the whole of \$2,448. On a part of this land we erected a store, 20 by 30 feet, which was supplied with goods and provisions suited to the needs of the colored people to the amount of about \$2,000, purchasing them in Baltimore at wholesale prices, to be sold at cost. It was not deemed best to invest largely in any one article, for deficiencies could be daily supplied from Baltimore upon the same terms.

One week from the day our lumber was on the ground, the store was finished, the goods brought in, unpacked, marked, and ready for sale, on Fifth day morning, 22d. We recalled Wm. A. Sampson from City Point and engaged him to take charge of the store, boarding himself, with directions to sell to colored people only, except what goods may be needed at the Home. No goods to be delivered until paid for. On the same day we purchased 17 cords of wood, made arrangements for it to be drawn immediately and placed in the yard ready for sale at cost. Eli Jones has charge of this department, with directions to sell to colored people only. We gave definite instructions that each department, the store, wood yard, and Home, should be kept entirely separate from the others. The Committee with the two young women agents devoted a portion of time to visiting the colored people in their cabins, finding large numbers destitute of suitable clothing, stockings, shoes and fuel, and altogether comfortless. If we thought them miserable when we visited them before, yesterday, in the snow and wintry weather, they seemed inexpressibly wretched. We think the houses where we went yesterday are worse than any that we had visited, and now that they are obliged to keep them shut up, they seem

much worse. One poor sick man and his old wife and one little grandchild we found hovering over a few sticks of wood smoking in an open furnace, with no fireplace, no possible outlet for the smoke but a little round pipe hole, unless they had the door open. How we wished for a hundred stoves and as many cords of wood!

Most of the boxes of clothing, deposited by Wm. A. Sampson at Fortress Monroe, had been ordered up to the Home, to be ready for distribution. We decided to open an Industrial School for women and girls in the two lower rooms of the Home, ordered benches to be made for seats, and purchased materials to commence with, until that which had been sent for, to the Committee at the North, should arrive. We have engaged Lavinia H. Jones, and accepted the gratuitous services of Sarah E. Wall, and placed them in charge of this department. The women to be taught sewing and knitting.

It is expected that Eli Jones will assist the women friends in visiting the people in their cabins and in rendering such aid as may be needed by the sick and destitute among them. Besides handing out much clothing, we distributed over one hundred pairs of shoes, the same number of stockings—the need for these being very great—large numbers of women and children shivering and barefoot in the cold and snow.

Our school opened on Second day, the 19th, with twenty-five women, next day fifty, the third day seventy, after which the key was turned and large numbers shut out. This shows a willingness to work for their clothing, if they can get the work to do.

Having arranged thus far, we left the mission under the care of our agents, purposing to return again in a few weeks, we having our doubts whether these two young women will be able to accomplish all that has been laid out for them to do.

In conclusion, while we have endeavored to confine our operations within the limits which the means at the disposal of the committee would justify, we believe that the amount of suffering and destitution which is forced upon our observation, and which we are yet unable to relieve, still calls for the continued and renewed exertions of Friends of New England.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

For the Committee,

EDWD. W. HOWLAND.

EDWARD EARLE.

ANN B. EARLE.

ELLEN K. BUFFUM.

WASHINGTON, 12th mo. 23, 1864.

We subjoin extracts of letters received from our agents since the above date :

WASHINGTON, 12 mo. 24th, 1864.

* * * The first day's operations in the store realized in cash receipts of \$2.05; the next day \$5 were received, and the third

day, sales amounted to \$17, and to-night it reaches \$56.40; not less than \$25 of this was for flour, in amounts of 20 cents' to one dollar's worth at once. The store was thronged most of the time to-day, many to see the new store, make inquiries, and in several instance they would buy a *little* flour, and in an hour or two come back for more. They are all pleased that it is exclusively for *them*.

WM. A. SAMPSON.

WASHINGTON, 12 mo. 30, 1864.

* * * Sales second day, \$25.30, third day, \$28.77, fourth day, \$19.19, fifth day, \$26.90, and to-day, \$47.20. So thou seest it is improving. The people are beginning to appreciate the store, and we have had many new customers to-day. The parcels called for are wonderfully small, making a great deal of labor for small sales. Let me give thee an example: "I want 25 cents' worth meat, a pound of bacon, a pint of *lasses*, a pound of sugar, 10 cents' worth of lard, and 5 cents' worth of cheese," and perhaps a candle and two herrings; making eight packages, and the whole amount one dollar and five cents. But I get along very pleasantly, knowing full well that it is a Providential thing that we are here, for some come with five cents and want it in *flour*; of course, in all such cases, the cake is mixed with water and eaten alone. Eli Jones is getting along bravely with his wood yard, and Lavinia and Sarah with their Industrial School. Both are boons to the contrabands.

WM. A. SAMPSON.

WASHINGTON, 1st mo. 6, 1865.

* * * The store takes well. Last Seventh day from 2 P. M. until 8, Eli and I worked as hard and as fast as thou hast often seen two men, yet the sales were light; but here is the reason in a nut-shell. These people are so poor that they are obliged to buy in very small quantities. "I want twenty-five cents' worth of flour." What else? "A pint of *lasse*." What else? "Got any mackerims?" No! have herrings. "How much is dey?" Two cents apiece. "Give me four." What else? "A paper of soda." What else? "What's de price of dem little buckets dere?" Twenty cents. "Oh, Lor'! I a'nt got money nough," etc., etc. Neither of us ever saw such poverty. To-day, a woman came and wanted flour, and fish, and wood, and gave me *all* her money,—one twenty-five cent piece. I gave her two pounds of flour, two fish, eight cents' worth of wood. The sales, since the last report, have been \$82.50, \$67.85, \$62.95, \$54.65, \$57.10, and to-day, raining, \$55.65. Total sales thus far, \$671.36.

WM. A. SAMPSON.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 21, 1864.

I sit down this evening to give a short account of our sewing school, which has really become quite an institution. Monday, the 19th, began our missionary work in good earnest. Immedi-

ately after dinner, the women flocked in and the clothing arrived from all directions except Worcester. Eli Jones, William A. Sampson, and Lavinia had their hands full to attend to the clothing, and I could not alone look after more than twenty-five scholars, so we sent a number away until next day, telling those that staid not to come again until to-day, because we could not attend to so many at once. Some thirty came yesterday and over fifty to-day.

Our short experience has been sufficient to convince us that we have undertaken too much. As soon as they saw the goods arrive they began to throng the house, giving employment to two these short days to distribute clothing. It was hard work to clear the room to-day so as to get an opportunity to eat dinner. We came near fasting yesterday, because no one could find time to go after something to eat.

Thirty-nine barrels and boxes came on Monday afternoon, some of which were immediately opened and the contents distributed. I have seen as poorly dressed objects in Norfolk, but they did not come in such crowds, and there were more of us to distribute. They begin to come as soon as it is fairly light and keep it up until dark.

We think now of having but two or three sewing schools a week. Most of the women to whom we have given clothing come to sew, and appear very glad to do so. Doubtless it is much pleasanter and more comfortable for them to be here than at home. The majority of them sew very well and quickly.

SARAH E. WALL.

WASHINGTON, 12 mo. 27, 1864.

* * * The health of the family at the Mission House is somewhat improving—colds giving way slightly. The store and its director are gaining in the confidence of the people. The wood-yard will answer, I trust, the expectations of the committee.

On Sixth day last, Lavinia visited and gave tickets to the needy to come to the Mission House the next day, when a throng appeared and a large day's work was done.

On the same day I visited the family of George Washington and found himself and wife in bed unable to do aught. Of course I ordered wood, &c., to be supplied in the name of N. E. Yearly Meeting. On first day just as I was leaving for meeting, a special messenger arrived at the Mission House announcing that a babe had been added to the family and that the wife was without food, and as I had reason to suppose without raiment for the little one. Answer was returned that prompt attention should be given to the case. Accordingly a dress for the baby and food for the mother were forwarded, and at a later hour, flour, &c., to make their Christmas as complete as possible.

ELI JONES.

WASHINGTON, 12 mo. 27, 1864.

I received thy welcome letter this afternoon. There are so many who want to attend the sewing school that I have to send some away for want of room to seat them and work to keep them all busy. The most of them can sew very well on plain work, and they work well too so far. Many can fit their work themselves when we tell them how we want them to do it, and they learn very easily to do as we want them to. I think there were as many as seventy-five came this afternoon; we employed but fifty. To-morrow I shall have another class of as many more, and sixth day still another class. In this way a large number of those we must clothe will have a chance to do something toward paying for what is furnished them.

Thou canst' have no idea of the crowds we had those cold days about our doors begging for clothes, poor creatures, almost naked, and some entirely barefooted. We questioned them very closely, and gave to those we thought really needy.

We concluded it would not be best to have more than three schools this week as we have been busy selecting clothing and marking it for the store. The men's clothing goes very fast there, and I think in this way we may get money to apply to cases of real necessity. We find several cases to whom we *must* give or let them suffer.

LAVINIA JONES.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3, 1865.

* * * We changed our course in relation to giving before the first week was out, as we found that was not going to answer. Now we give only to those who have been visited by Lavinia or Harriette Carter, they giving tickets for those to come after clothing whom they consider most needy. We have three sewing schools a week and one day for distribution of clothing.

Bed-sacks are very much needed, and calico as much as anything.

SARAH E. WALL.

WASHINGTON, D. C., 1st mo. 10th, 1865.

* * * The Industrial School is a decided success. Three sessions have been held every week, and in some instances four. The teachers think the pupils make good improvement, and are very industrious while together. An intelligent colored woman has been employed in the forenoons, in cutting and preparing work, and in the school as teacher, and all concur in saying that she acquits herself well in her position. She holds herself in readiness to devote all the time to the work that is desired. She lives near and boards herself.

Now for the work of distribution. At least 350 families, or parts of families, have already become recipients of the bounty of New England Friends in the form of clothing, shoes, etc., to whom have been distributed eight hundred and fifty articles. At

least one hundred more have been purchased at reduced prices, making the total distribution exceed one thousand articles. On fifth day of each week the doors are thrown open to such as have obtained tickets from either member of the household during that week, after due investigation of their needs. They separately present their claims to the distributors, and such relief is afforded as the case seems to demand. For all practical purposes we think one day in a week better than more for distribution. In the interim if urgent cases present they are attended to. The store will realize all that was anticipated of it, but the wood-yard will prove more difficult to manage than any other department of our work.

Your friend,

ELI JONES.

WASHINGTON, 1st mo. 10, 1865.

Thy welcome letter should have been answered ere this, but my poor health with my many cares have hindered me. Still I have been absent but from one sewing school on account of ill health. I can see that my classes are improving fast in their sewing and in their appearance also. I read to them every time we meet, and it seems to gratify and interest them.

We commenced a school here last first day at 2 o'clock; had about 20 scholars. I think they staid at home because it was very cold.

We received a noble box from you last Seventh day, for which I wish to express my heartfelt thanks. The bed-ticking we need very much, also calico for women's dresses. There are so many very large women we cannot get anything large enough among the dresses that are sent to us to fit them, so we must make dresses and skirts for them. We have clothed a great many of these poor creatures since we have been here.

I got my cold a week ago last Seventh day, going around seeing after the sick ones in the snow, and have had to stay in the house since, but have been able to see after the business here the most of the time; we have a good colored woman to work in the kitchen, and I have engaged one of my class to assist in cutting and overseeing the sewing, whom I find to be a good hand at the business. To-morrow if the weather is suitable I intend to spend in visiting, and leave Sarah with a colored woman, to manage the school. I shall give tickets to the needy ones as far as I go and tell them to come Fifth day and get the clothing. I give tickets to my class at the house as I find their need.

Thy attached friend,

LAVINIA.

WASHINGTON, 1st mo. 13th, 1865.

* * * I went up to Baltimore and replenished the stock of goods to satisfaction, returning the same evening, goods all arriving next day. The experience gained enabled me to get articles that suit the trade. The sales have been, seventh day, \$122.75, \$104, \$27.50, \$52.05, \$79.35, \$72.50. Total sales thus far, \$1129.51.

WM. A. SAMPSON.